

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

SY-05 SCA-01 L-03 DODE-00 ITFE-00 /028 W

----- 083461

R 110225Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5596

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 6219

FOR D/HA/ORM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, LA, VS, CB

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REF: VIENTIANE 4921

1. IN REFTEL, DATED JULY 21, 1975, WE ADVISED DEPARTMENT THAT COUNTRY TEAM HAD DECIDED CONSULAR SECTION SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN ATTEMPTS TO LOCATE POTENTIAL REFUGEE CASES IN VIENTIANE BECAUSE OF RISK TO EMBASSY EMPLOYEES AND TO FAMILIES WE CONTACT AND ALSO BECAUSE OF POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES WITH LAO GOVERNMENT, WHICH COULD ACCUSE EMBASSY OF ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO FLEE LAOS.

2. SINCE REFTEL WAS WRITTEN, POLICE SURVEILLANCE IN LAOS HAS INCREASED. ROADBLOCKS AND SEARCHES ARE NOW COMMON OCCURRENCES IN VIENTIANE. EMBASSY AMERICAN AND LOCAL PERSONNEL NOT EXEMPT FROM THESE SEARCHES. RISK INVOLVED IN TRYING TO DELIVER MESSAGES TO POTENTIAL REFUGEE FAMILIES HAS INCREASED. (FYI. ONE LAO NATIONAL EMPLOYEE OF CONSULAR SECTION WHO WAS INVOLVED IN VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN REFUGEE PROGRAM HAS ALREADY FOUND IT NECESSARY TO LEAVE LAOS. END FYI.)

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3. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO RECEIVE LETTERS AND CABLES

THROUGH BOTH OFFICIAL AND COMMERCIAL CHANNELS ASKING US TO CONTACT RELATIVES AND FRIENDS STILL IN VIENTIANE OF AMERICAN CITIZENS, PERMANENT RESIDENTS OR REFUGEES FOR PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING REFUGEE PROCEDURES TO THESE PERSONS. IN SOME CASES WHERE IT WAS POSSIBLE TO PASS MESSAGE DISCREETLY OR WHERE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTED RISK (E.G. MINOR CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM PARENTS), EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAVE CONTACTED VIETNAMESE OR CAMBODIAN NATIONALS RESIDENT IN VIENTIANE. HOWEVER, IN MOST SUCH CASES, WE HAVE HELD LETTERS OR CABLES IN CONSULAR SECTION IN EVENT ADDRESSEES APPROACH EMBASSY, AND HAVE WRITTEN TO INFORM RELATIVE OR FRIEND IN U.S. THAT WE CANNOT DELIVER MESSAGE. WE HAVE, OF COURSE, CONTINUED TO ADVISE PEOPLE WRITING ABOUT LAO CITIZENS THAT THIS EMBASSY IS NOT HANDLING LAO REFUGEE PROGRAM.

4. FOR ORM: REQUEST YOU INFORM ALL USG AGENCIES INVOLVED WITH INDOCHINESE REFUGEE MATTERS AND PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO MAKE INQUIRIES OF DEPARTMENT THAT EMBASSY VIENTIANE IS NOT REPEAT NOT ABLE TO SEARCH FOR PERSONS IN LAOS FOR POSSIBLE PROCESSING AS REFUGEES. NOR IS EMBASSY ABLE TO ASSIST REFUGEES IN LEAVING LAOS. THEY MUST MANAGE MATTER OF EXIT DOCUMENTS OR PROCEDURES ON THEIR OWN. WE WILL BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE AND HOLD MAIL FOR PERSONS WHO WISH TO APPROACH CONSULAR SECTION TO PICK UP MAIL. WE WILL CONTINUE TO ADVISE VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN NATIONALS WHO APPROACH EMBASSY OF REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES OF U.S. REFUGEE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, IF LAO CITIZENS INQUIRE ABOUT REFUGEE STATUS, CONSULAR SECTION PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO SAY THAT LAO NATIONALS MUST APPROACH U.S. CONSULATE OR EMBASSY OUTSIDE LAOS TO MAKE INQUIRY ABOUT THIS U.S. PROGRAM. WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD EXPLAIN TO CONCERNED FAMILIES IN U.S. AND TO INTERESTED CONGRESSMEN THAT MAINTENANCE OF U.S.-LAO RELATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS OF SAFETY OF EMBASSY'S AMERICAN AND LOCAL PERSONNEL IN LAOS HAVE CAUSED US TO ADOPT THIS POSITION.

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5. POST ALSO REQUESTS THAT, INsofar AS POSSIBLE, ALL OFFICIAL CABLES AND CORRESPONDENCE ON REFUGEE MATTERS SENT TO VIENTIANE BE CLASSIFIED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE OR HIGHER.

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 11 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Authority: RowellE0
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Errors: N/A
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